

Published: Aug. 19, 2014, Kokomo Tribune [Page: A4]

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Editorial: Moped law long overdue

We've all seen them on the streets, and their popularity is only growing.

Mopeds have coasted in a legal grey area for years in Indiana. A lack of registration, testing and licensure allowed those without other means of transport to join other vehicles on the road without many prerequisites, often making for dangerous driving for all involved.

But, starting Jan. 1, 2015, owners will be required to register their scooters thanks to a law sponsored by State Rep. Milo Smith, R-Columbus, and signed into law by Gov. Mike Pence.

Not only that, but scooter operators will also be compelled to obtain a valid state identification and pass a road sign test, according to a story by Mike Fletcher we published last month. (Though, they still won't have to have insurance for their vehicles.)

This change is a positive step for everyone on the road as the laws surrounding moped use have been muddy at best for years. Unlike cars, trucks, busses and every other type of vehicle on the road, police officers may not be as familiar with the current legislation surrounding scooter usage. This law should help bring some much-needed clarity to the situation.

Moped drivers shouldn't see this as a complete downside, either, as the maximum speed has been raised to 35 mph. Owners may also see registration of their vehicles as a positive step. Coupled with the law's stipulation that dealers and manufacturers title their motorized bikes properly, the requirement to register may help recover more stolen mopeds in the future. Anyone who listens to the police scanner or reads the police reports knows how pervasive the problem of stolen mopeds truly is

Mopeds use the same roadway as everyone else. This law is a common sense way to make sure we're all on the same page.